

VZCZCXRO4816  
OO RUEHDA  
DE RUEHAK #1660/01 2611338  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 171338Z SEP 08  
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7477  
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC//PA  
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU  
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 9174  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 4748  
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 3239  
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 6868  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 6709  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 3279  
RUEUITH/DET 1 39LG ANKARA TU  
RHMFISS/USDOCO 6ATAF IZMIR TU  
RHMFISS/39OS INCIRLIK AB TU  
RHMFISS/AFOSI DET 523 IZMIR TU  
RHMFISS/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU  
RHMFISS/AFOSI DET 522 INCIRLIK AB TU  
RUEUITH/AFLO ANKARA TU

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 ANKARA 001660

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL  
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2008

In Today's Papers

Deniz Feneri Prosecutor Accuses Turkish Authorities of not Cooperating

All media outlets report that on Wednesday, a court in Frankfurt is expected to announce its verdict in the trial against suspects charged with financial irregularities in the Germany-based, Islamist-oriented Deniz Feneri charity. German Prosecutor Kerstin Lotz has called for a six-year prison sentence for Mehmet Gurhan, director of Kanal 7 TV Europe director. A two-year sentence is being sought for the charity accountant Firdevsi Ermis and a three-year sentence is being sought for Deniz Feneri manager in Germany Mehmet Taskan. Papers emphasize Lotz's allegations that the suspects facing trial in Germany were merely henchmen, but the masterminds of the fraud were "hiding in Turkey." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet and mainstream Milliyet report prosecutor Lotz said the main suspects behind all irregularities were Zekeriya Karaman, the founder of the Turkish Deniz Feneri charity and the president of Kanal 7 Television, Ismail Karahan, Kanal 7 advertisement director, and Zahid Akman, the chair of Turkey's radio and television watchdog RTUK. Mainstream Vatan reports Lotz also said the Turkish police turned down requests to investigate the Turkish leg of the Deniz Feneri irregularities.

Papers report opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal said "Prime Minister Erdogan has close ties with Deniz Feneri suspects, but tried to escape responsibility by saying that he does not know them." In addition, Baykal said, "The Deniz Feneri suspects and the PM have worked together in solidarity."

Breaking News: Turkish televisions are currently reporting that the court in Frankfurt has reached their decision. The court sentenced Mehmet Gurhan to 5 years 10 months and Mehmet Taskan to two years 9 months in prison.

Editorial Commentary on Deniz Feneri Germany Case

Mustafa Mutlu wrote in mainstream Vatan: "During yesterday's court session of the Deniz Feneri case, the German prosecutor said that the kingpins of the organization live in Turkey and she complained

that she couldn't get any support from Turkish police. Now I have a question for the Interior Minister and the Chief of Security. Since when have the Turkish police ceased their duty to fight against international and organized fraud?

#### DTP Defense

All papers follow Ahmet Turk's defense arguments in the Constitutional Court case which seeks to ban the pro-Kurdish opposition party DTP. Reports note Turk's verbal argument lasted 3 hours. Ahmet Turk said party closure is an unusual practice in democracies and reminded the court that the DTP won 2 million votes in the last elections. Referring to accusations the DTP supports the PKK, Ahmet Turk said "The PKK is a result of Kurdish problem. Imprisoned leader Ocalan is for a democratic and peaceful solution and his views should be taken into consideration."

Vatan carries the story, "He Not Only Defended the DTP, but also the PKK," while leftist Taraf carries the headline, "We Cannot Call the PKK Terrorists." Hurriyet asked Ahmet Turk about his impressions of the court proceedings and he responded, "None of the Court Justices asked any questions, which may indicate that they see the DTP on their deathbed."

The Constitutional Court indictment against the DTP calls for a political ban on 220 party members, including the current chairman Ahmet Turk.

#### General Basbug Meets the Press

All papers report on the "communication meeting" that the Turkish General Staff (TGS) chief General Basbug held with the media

ANKARA 00001660 002 OF 004

yesterday. Mainstreams Sabah's headline reads "Basbug Sets His Criteria," in a reference to the rules he outlined regarding communication with the media. Meanwhile, Milliyet's headline reads "New Lines from General Basbug" and Hurriyet notes Basbug's warning to politicians, "Do Not Try to Involve Us in Politics." Sabah reports that during the three and a half hour meeting with media executives, General Basbug addressed several issues including the EU, Georgia, terrorism and cross-border operations. He supported Turkey's EU bid by saying, "Turkey's EU membership is the realization of Ataturk's goal to carry Turkey above the level of contemporary civilizations." However, he also warned the EU to "not play with our nation-state structure in an attempt to weaken our unitary state structure." On politics, Basbug said "no one, including the media, should try to use the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) for their own political ends. Do not include the TSK in daily matters. Martyred soldiers should not be used as a tool for cheap politics." Regarding terrorism, General Basbug said "the separatist terrorist organization (PKK) is coming to an end. Only people from Syria, Iran and Europe are joining the organization. Still, the PKK is actively recruiting those in the 14-18 age group. It is an important duty to save these people from the terrorist organization." Cumhuriyet reports that General Basbug assessed secularism, unitary structure, EU, terrorism and regional developments in his meeting with the editors-in-chief and the Ankara representatives of the newspapers. Zaman reports that the TGS will be having weekly press briefings to strengthen relations with the media. The first such briefing will be held on September 26.

Meanwhile, Hurriyet notes that General Basbug gave a fact sheet regarding the last 24 years of terrorism. Basbug said "32,000 terrorists have been rendered ineffective. The number of civilian casualties is 5,560 and the number of soldiers lost in the fight is 6,482."

#### Editorial Commentary on General Basbug Meeting with Press

Oral Calislar wrote in liberal-intellectual Radikal: "Given the nature of current events, it is important to follow what General Basbug says to the media. On the other hand, the military should have no influence on politics in a real democracy. Democracy and civilian politics work parallel to each other. General Basbug's remarks on important issues signal some changes in the military's approach. Thus, relations between the media and the military are entering a new period. However, the extent to which it will help

civilian politics remains to be seen."

Ergun Babahan wrote in mainstream Sabah: "General Basbug has the characteristics of a soldier and a diplomat. He wants to open a new page in the relations between the General Staff and the media. His message to politicians is clear - "Don't use the martyrs for cheap political tricks." He is definitely a different commander. Democracy and the state of law is as important as secularism for him."

Fikret Bila wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "General Basbug wants a transparent communication system. He warned everybody, including the media, not to use the Turkish Armed Forces for their own interests. And he urged everyone not to involve the military in daily issues and to leave the martyred soldiers out of cheap politics."

Hakan Celik wrote in tabloid Posta: "During his meeting with the media, General Basbug spoke on topics ranging from secularism to the PKK to relations with the U.S. His speech was prepared with the sensitivity of a diplomat and an academic. And with every sentence, he pledged that the Turkish General Staff will be more active and transparent with the media and the public from now on."

Mustafa Unal in Islamist-oriented Zaman: "Information leaked from Basbug's meeting with the press indicates Basbug used very careful

ANKARA 00001660 003 OF 004

language despite the fact he made a long speech, and that he was particularly careful when talking about controversial issues which might negatively affect his ties with the government. The first signs have been good. I expect, in the new era, the military will put its focus more on military matters. As a result of this, we might move forward regarding the war on terror. There's full consensus between the government and military over the authorization to launch cross border operations into northern Iraq. We arrived at this point through talks behind closed doors, and not by debating the issue in front of the public. It seems that the two years Basbug will remain in office will be a normal period."

Odierno, The 'Hood General,' Takes Control of Forces in Iraq  
Media outlets have donned U.S. General Ray Odierno the "Hood General," in a reference to an incident in 2003 when U.S. forces apprehended and hooded Turkish Special Forces in northern Iraq. At that time, Odierno was in charge of U.S. forces in northern Iraq, so the Turkish press holds him responsible for the humiliation of Turkish troops. Mainstream Sabah reports, "The Hood General is the Head of Forces in Iraq" Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet writes, "The Era of the Hood General in Iraq," begins as "Hood General Odierno assumes the throne in Baghdad." Liberal Radikal, "From Now On, Iraq's Boss is Hood General Odierno," and notes Odierno sees Iraq "as his second home." Islamist-oriented Zaman reports, "From now On, Iraq is entrusted to Odierno," and reminds, "Odierno drew reactions when he suggested negotiations with the PKK."

Paper: 'One By One, They are Falling'

Media outlets find no relief from their anxieties despite USG efforts to solve the financial crisis. Coverage expresses fears global markets have not see the worst yet. Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports, "Markets Come to a Halt," as "The Fed is attempting to solve Wall Street's problems by extending \$70-75 billion in support of saving major companies like AIG, and potentially JPMorgan, Chase, and Goldman Sachs," but that "the plan to save AIG may not be successful in saving the markets from a disaster." Islamist-oriented Zaman reports, "The Business World Is Preparing an Emergency Action Plan to deal with the Global Economic Turmoil," but describes no actual action plan and even notes, "the Turkish private sector has over \$170 billion in debts overseas," which "increases the risk for foreign investments in Turkey." Mainstream Vatan carries the headline, "The Most Critical Day for the Markets," and reports, "World markets hold their breath as they await the fate of American insurance giant AIG." Vatan also reports, "U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson insists the U.S. will not pay to save banks with taxpayer money," but notes, "If liquidity problems like the one involving AIG continue in other private firms and the government does not help them, more companies like Lehman

Brothers will declare bankruptcy and market tension will increase."

#### Editorial Commentary on Global Economic Meltdown and Turkey

Cuneyt Ulsever wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "The Turkish economy runs on hot cash from global markets. Given the magnitude of the recent global crisis, the transfer of hot cash may come to an end. It is unclear whether PM Erdogan is really aware of the serious nature of the current global economic crisis. Moreover, he has a bad reputation for managing crises poorly. Corruption and poverty are famous for toppling governments. It looks like the duo is just about to strike in Turkey."

Ibrahim Karagul wrote in Islamist leaning Yeni Safak: "The collapse of Lehman Brothers indicates that the global economic bosses cannot even manage themselves, much less the world economy. The aftermath of this crisis is even more frightening. Will there be another 9/11? Will there be new American military interventions in order to obtain some new economic funds? Nobody knows what is next."

#### Turkish PM's Iftar with Foreign Ambassadors

ANKARA 00001660 004 OF 004

Hurriyet, Milliyet and Yeni Safak report Prime Minister Erdogan hosted an Iftar dinner for the Ambassadors to Turkey. Erdogan expressed disappointment about the EU's treatment of Turkey's EU bid, "Turkey does not want anything more than the same process applied to other candidates. The EU should tell us if their intentions in this process are sincere or not."

#### Editorial Commentary on Pakistan

Gokcen Ogan writes in Islamist-oriented Zaman: "It won't be surprising to see Pakistan's new president Asif Ali Zardari continue Pakistan's top level relationship with the U.S., in return for American support for his government. The Pakistani military's objection to U.S. operations along the border with Afghanistan will be limited, because the Pakistani military needs American help in order to replenish its military power, close the technology gap with India, and preserve its regional power. And also, if Osama bin-Laden is captured before the upcoming presidential elections in the U.S., the Republicans will win the election."

TV News:  
CNN Turk

#### Domestic News

- President Abdullah Gul warns university rectors in a meeting Tuesday against tensions and polarization in universities.
- The pro-Kurdish DTP has called for a parliamentary investigation into this summer's forest fires in east and southeast Turkey.
- 41 companies are given licenses authorizing metal exploration in the Aegean tourist city of Marmaris.

#### International News

- NATO chief Jaap de Hoop Scheffer says Georgia's path to NATO membership was "wide open."
- Pakistan's military says its forces had received orders to fire on U.S. troops if they entered Pakistani territory.
- President Bashar Assad has named Syria's first ambassador to Iraq since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion.

-  
WILSON